

# Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

FOUNDED 1980 AS AMES HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter to Members 2004 FALL.....ISSUE #4/4

The mission of the Ames Historical Society is to preserve local history and illuminate its stories.



George Roberson was an early mechanical genius who made a successful transition from horse-and-buggy needs to automobiles. He operated a versatile shop on Main Street and his painted building sign has been preserved inside the soon-to-be opened Olde Main Brewery on Main Street.

### Ames Historical Society Board:

President	Kathy Svec
Vice-President	Janet Jepeway
Secretary	Carole Jensen
Treasurer	Peggy Baer

### Members:

Jorgen Rasmussen, Lynn Jenison, Leo Lawler, Margaret Elbert Benson, Catherine Hunt, Dennis Wendell, Deborah Vance, Ken Cameron, Cynthia Bennet

The Board meets the second Monday of each month at City Hall.

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501C3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

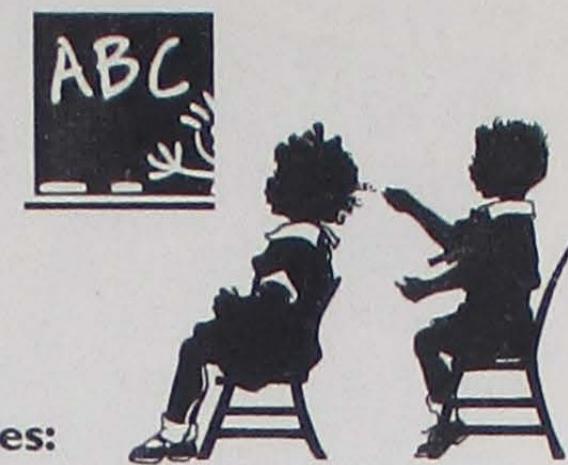
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Phone: 515-232-2148  
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Website: www.ameshistoricalsociety.org

The newsletter is published four times a year for AHS members. Comments & questions be directed to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18th and Burnett, Ames, IA. Open April 1 through October 31.

## Join Us Sunday, September 12, 2004: Hoggatt School Festival 11am to 5pm Free and open to the public – children especially invited

The Society's one-room school festival will provide 1862-style fun – including light-hearted school lessons, contests and recess activities that students would have experienced in earlier times. Various prizes will be awarded, including the Iowa schoolhouse quarters.



### September 12 Festival Schedule and Activities:

11am – 3pm Sign up for the day's activities near the school house.

11:00 - noon Box Social Lunch

Participants are asked to bring a decorated box or basket with enough food inside for a family to eat. These boxes will be auctioned off at noon. The lucky buyer will share his or her basket of food with the ones who made the box or basket. Proceeds from this auction will benefit Hoggatt School.

1:00 Community Song Fest

1:30 Flag Ceremony

2:00 Recitations & short plays

3:00 Contests for participants who sign up for each activity:

a. Spelling Bees

b. Ciphering Bees (math)

c. Races such as 3-legged races or sack races or tug of war

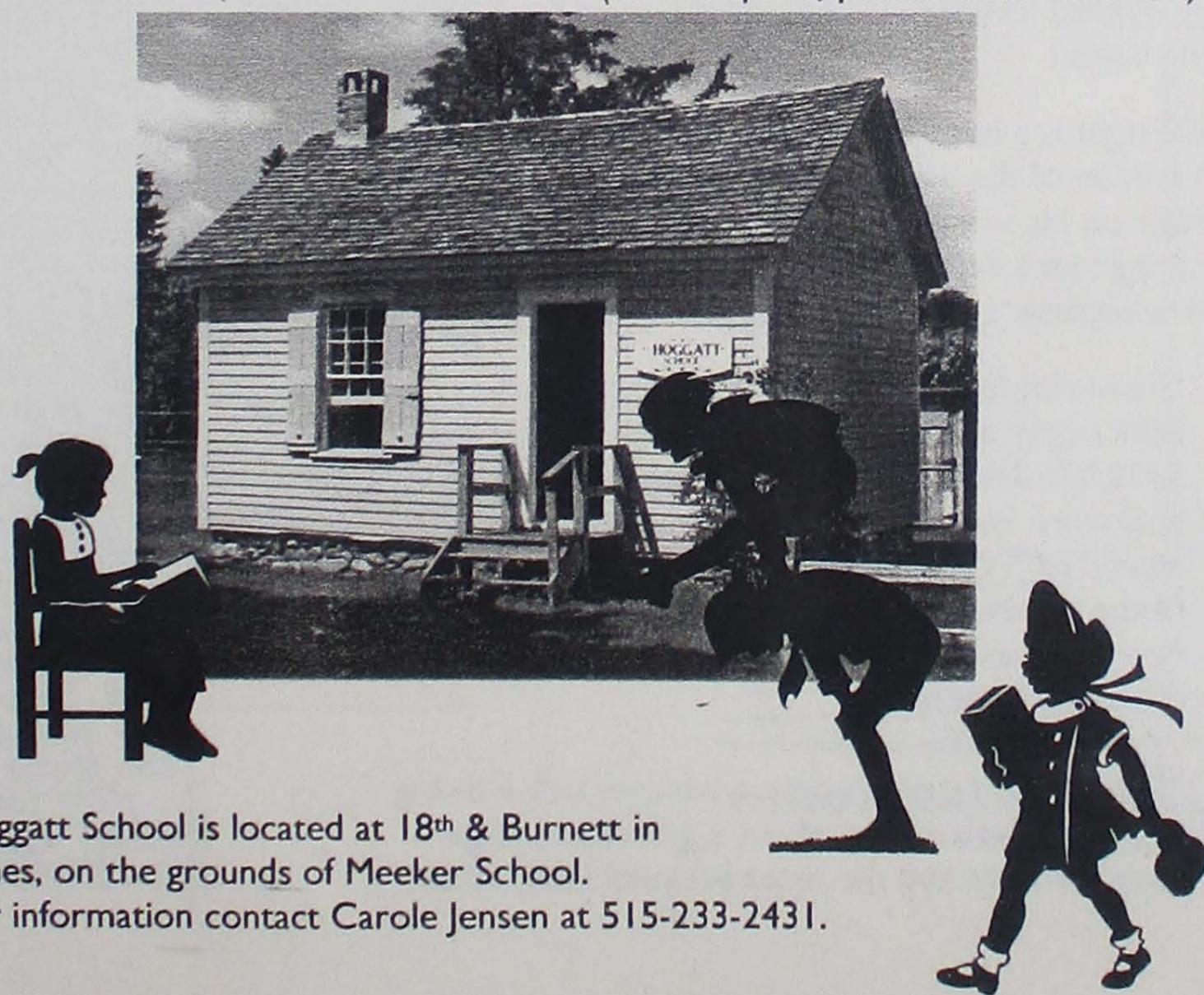
d. Abe Lincoln Look-Alike contest (Lincoln was president when the school was built)

e. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Exams – can you pass an 1862 test?

f. Hand writing contests

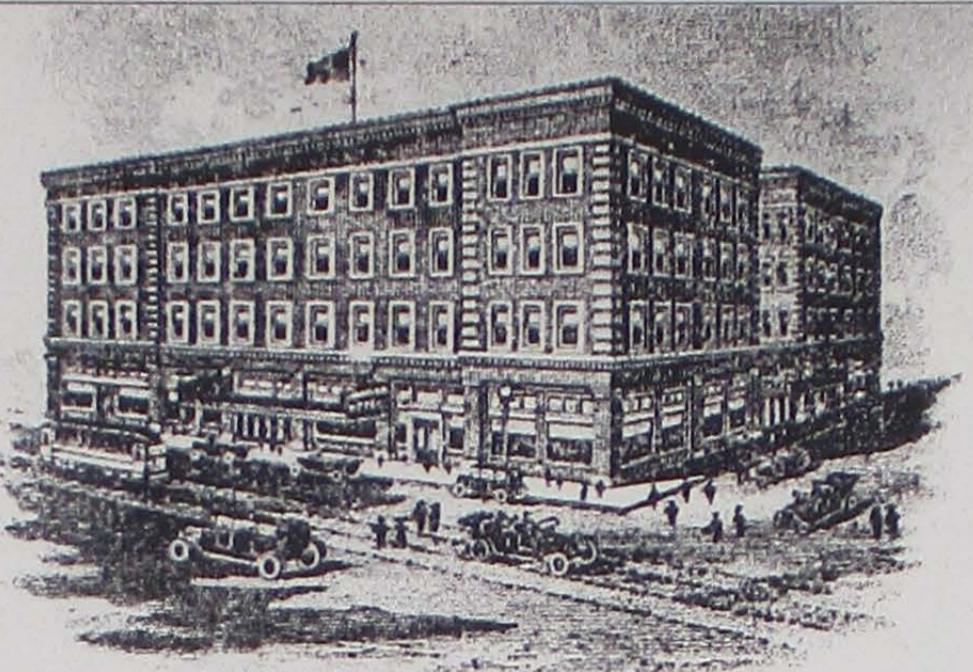
4:30 Graduation certificates and awards.

(In case of rain, festival will be cancelled.)



Hoggatt School is located at 18<sup>th</sup> & Burnett in Ames, on the grounds of Meeker School.

For information contact Carole Jensen at 515-233-2431.



NEW AND ABSOLUTELY FIRE PROOF

## "The Final Word in Hotels" May 31, 1916, Grand Opening of the Sheldon-Munn Hotel

In the last newsletter, we re-printed a charming recollection by Ames historian, Farwell T. Brown, about a 1919 Brown family Christmas dinner at the Sheldon-Munn Hotel.

Farwell was nine years old in 1919 and the hotel was just over 3 years old. For the growing city of Ames, it was still a sparkling new jewel in its Main Street setting.

After more than a year of watching it rise from the street, how did Ames citizens react when the hotel finally opened its doors? What did the hotel look like on the inside?

To the right is a hasty article that appeared in the May 30th edition of the newspaper, written by a staff member on his or her way to the festive opening event, promising more details. Here follow several excerpts from newspaper accounts of that grand opening...

"Towering four stories in the air at the corner of Main Street and Kellogg avenues, the palatial new \$150,000 Sheldon-Munn Hotel representing the final word known to modern hotel building and equipping. Words of praise for the completeness of the building and the beauty of the furnishings have been expressed by every visitor who has entered its doors.

"Seventy-two guest rooms, a banquet hall, a dining room, a private dining room, a grill room, large sample rooms and the most beautiful lobby of any

## SHELDON-MUNN HOTEL OPENED

With music floating through the air, with banqueters eating, drinking and merry, with the people of Ames happy that the city has a real hotel, a great crowd of people gathered at the new Sheldon-Munn hotel last evening.

This was the opening night—the night of all nights to which the people had been looking forward ever since there has been an Ames. It was a glorious feeling that prevailed and added another to the much-needed public places of the city.

Mrs. E. T. Hibner has assumed control of the hotel. She is ably assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Merrill. Mr. Merrill is manager of the hotel, while his wife sees to about everything on the place. They are experienced hotel people, and come to Ames prepared to give the traveling public and the Ames citizens the best there is in the world. They have undertaken a big thing, but it is no bigger than the undertaking of getting such a building for the city.

The Tribune is printed at the time the merry crowd is assembled in the dining room, just at the time when everybody is quaffing cold swigs to the success of the entire enterprise. The reporter would not miss that great feast for the world and that is the reason a more extended report cannot be printed in this issue of the paper. Next week a complete report will be made of the affair and due credit shall be given to those who have made it possible that the city has so elegant a structure.

Suffice to say right now that every person in Ames is interested in the new hotel, interested in seeing it become one of the great successes of the city, see it "blossom as the rose" and will use every endeavor to bring people to this city. It has aptly been said, "Ames Advertises America". It can just as aptly be said, "The Sheldon-Munn Hotel Advertises Ames."

Now for the ball room to hear the lovely things which are being said of the Pride of Ames.

hotel in the middle west combine to entertain the guests in ease and comfort.

"The big banquet hall on fourth floor is one of the show places of the hotel. It is 45x68 feet in size and is decorated in blue and gold with light fixtures and window hangings to match.

"The floor is said to be the finest dance floor in Iowa and when covered with a canvas makes the finest banquet hall in Iowa. Three hundred banqueters can be seated at one time in this room, which opens on three sides and is possessed of perfect ventilation.

"It would hardly do to pass through this article without calling especial attention to the office and lobby. Across the north side of the lobby an elegant office has been fixed up. Large roomy leather chairs are at every convenient point, while huge davenports fill the odd spots. A fireplace along the east side of the rooms adds a homelike appearance. The desk is of the finest material with a cigar case along the west side. In an alcove are a number of writing tables where men and women can do their correspondence without interruption. A public stenographer has her office in the lobby. A telephone system connecting the world with every room is an advantage that is seldom found in a town the size of Ames.

#### As the Enlarged Sheldon-Munn Hotel Will Appear



WITH excavation for the basement almost completed, actual construction will start soon on the new \$35,000 addition to the Sheldon-Munn hotel. The addition is being built by A. H. and H. A. Munn and will be leased to S. F. McGinn and E. F. Tangney, new owners of the original building. Ben Cole of Ames has the general contract for the building.

In June 1926, this illustration in the newspaper announced the upcoming addition to the Sheldon-Munn. Project contractor, Ben Cole, also built the original McFarland Clinic at 315 Fifth, and in 1938, the Grand Avenue underpass.

"The banquet was one of the finest efforts of the kind ever pulled off in Ames. The tables had been beautifully decorated and at the plate of each person was a sweet smelling jasmine. The hotel dishes were used and the S.M. monogram in gilt letters were pretty as a picture. The menus were handpainted and printed and were the work of an artist. Those menu cards will long be preserved by the attendants as souvenirs of the occasion."



#### Formal Opening SHELDON-MUNN Hotel

Wednesday, May Thirty-first  
Nineteen Hundred Sixteen  
AMES, IOWA

A copy of the handpainted program is  
in the Society's collection.

# Ames Historical Society News

## Executive Director Search

A search is underway for a 16-hour/week Executive Director for the Society. Applications were taken through August 31, and a committee of the Board will interview applicants. The Director will provide regular interface with the public and oversee various facets of the Society's activities.

## Site Committee to Begin Work

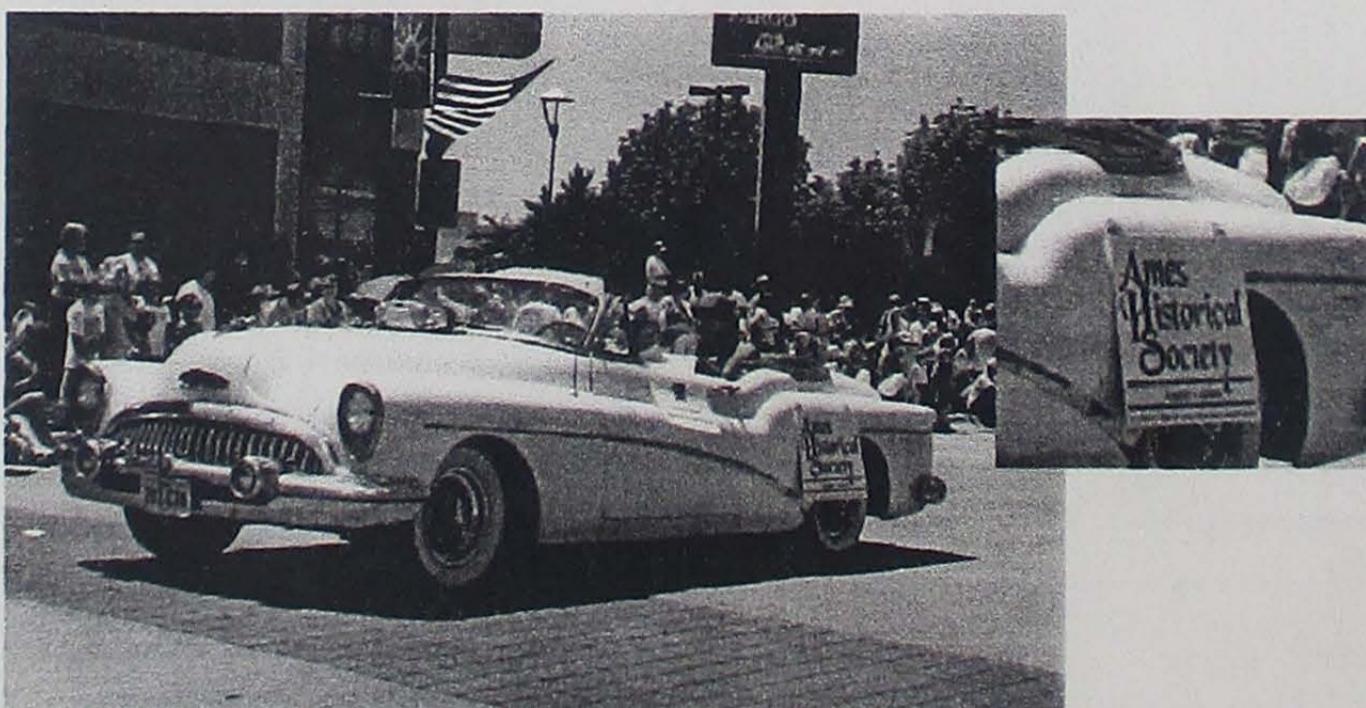
To meet the Society's goal of having a permanent museum site in five years, the Board appointed a Site Committee to gather information and seek suitable property. Members interested in this committee may call the president, Kathy Svec, at 515-232-4877.

## Society is Awarded HRDP Grants

The Society was pleased to receive word of grant awards for both 2004-05, and 2005-06 through the Iowa Historic Resource Development Program. The grants will fund the first stages of processing The Tribune Photo Archive. Dollars received for 2004-05 are \$3,355 and for 2005-06, \$5633. Organizations may match the state funds with both cash and in-kind or donated contributions.

## Society-Sponsored Car Leads July 4 Parade on Main Street

Society Board member, Leo Lawlor, jumped into the fun of the 2004 revived July Fourth Parade on Main Street by securing the loan of this fine Buick convertible from Roger Volker (driving) and convincing Farwell and Ruth Brown (back seat) to serve as Parade Marshals. The warm, sunny day brought out thousands of parade watchers, making the day a great success.



## Kingland Systems Opens Renovated Theater Building

Kingland Systems of Clear Lake, Iowa, has remodeled the Ames Theater building in Campustown to accommodate their business operations. Kingland sought to replicate the original front of the building as much as possible – but were unable to find a good photograph to aid their design. The Society was pleased supply the missing link – this good quality 1930 image to guide the re-construction of the facade.



The "New" Ames Theater in 1930 - where talking pictures first appeared.

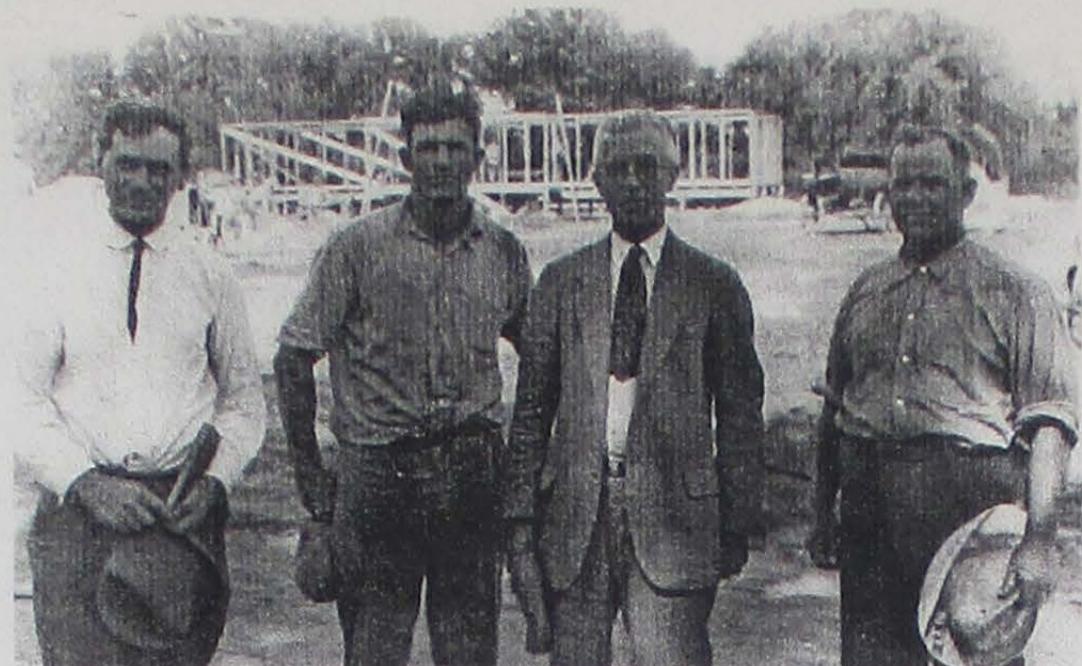


Theater as it appears today. Prior to the renovation, the original façade was covered with decorative aluminum sheeting. Kingland had other more recently installed materials removed and recovered the building front with compatible red brick. They also retained the look of the theater marquee for their business sign.

# Ames Historical Society News

## Sneak Preview: Fall Exhibit will Highlight R. Emmett Carr and Carr's Pool, Nov. – Jan. at Ames Public Library

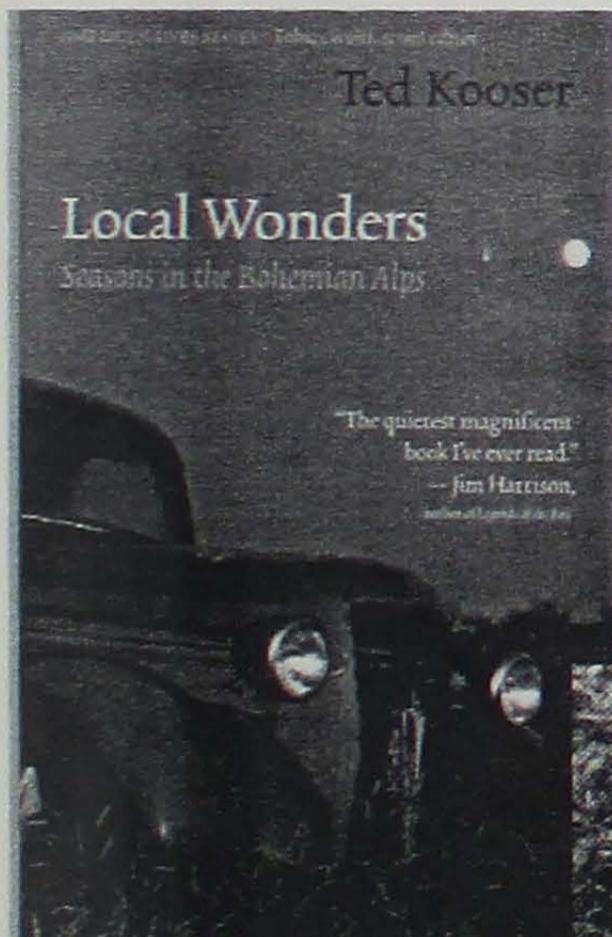
- R.E. Carr lived 1878 - 1957
- oldest of 9 children; married Alpha Defore in 1906
- taught carpentry under Prof. Davidson at ISC; operated a dairy, Ames Motor Transport & a sand and gravel pit business, and built farm silos
- couple was childless, but early in their marriage, started taking in homeless children
- the couple adopted three children, and were foster parents to 83 more
- some of these children took the Carr name, some did not; they lived with the Carr's as long as they wished or until they found another home
- approached the city to build a pool as an alternative to the deep gravel pit children were swimming in, but the idea was turned down
- with a group of donors, built and opened Carr's Pool in 1926; Emmett was its first manager
- started a youth drum & bugle corps, and set up a portable skating rink in the field house among many youth activities
- lifelong member of First Christian Church



Carr, right, is shown in 1926 with the other pool builders.



1930s picture shows swimmers with bath house.



## Newly Named Poet Laureate Born in Ames

Ted Kooser, left, currently of Garland, Nebraska, was born in Ames and graduated from Iowa State University in 1962. He has been named US Poet Laureate by the Library of Congress.

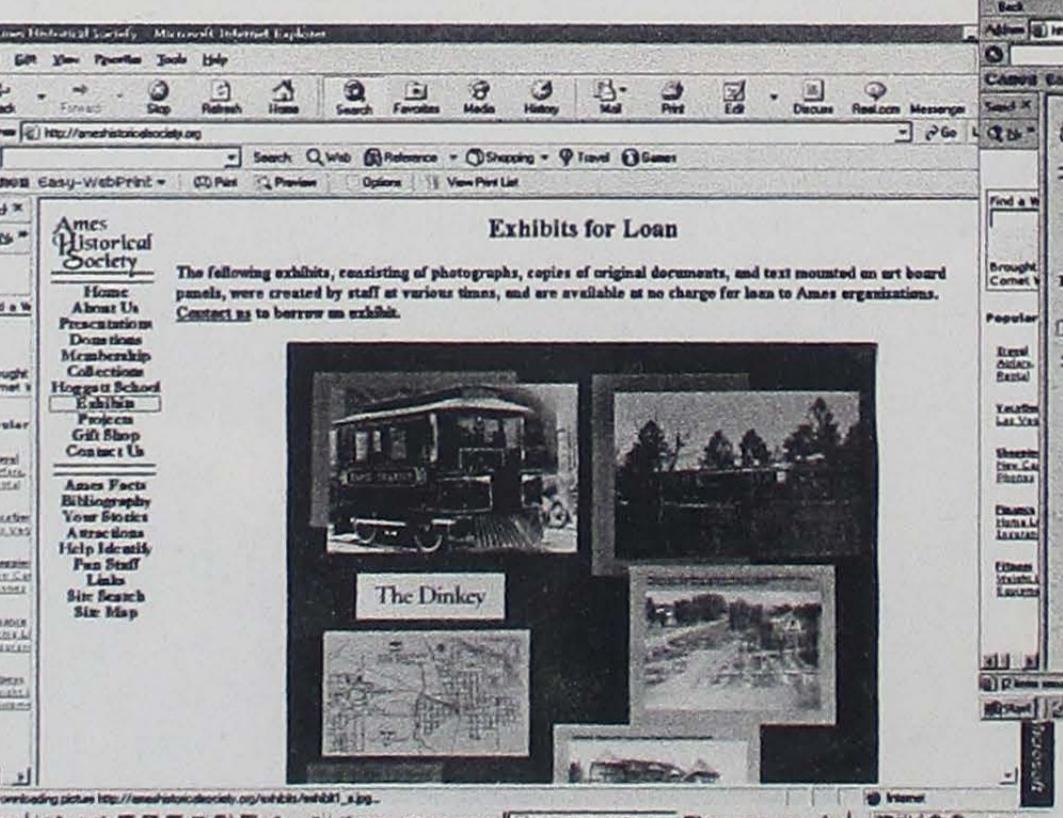
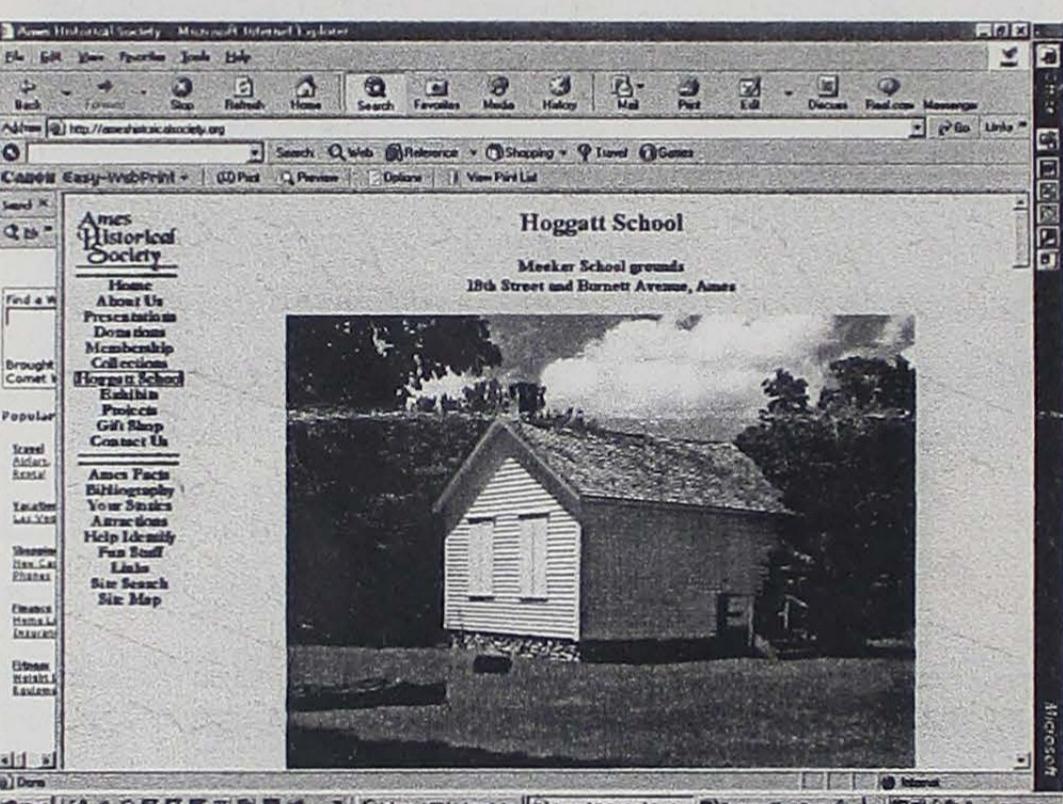
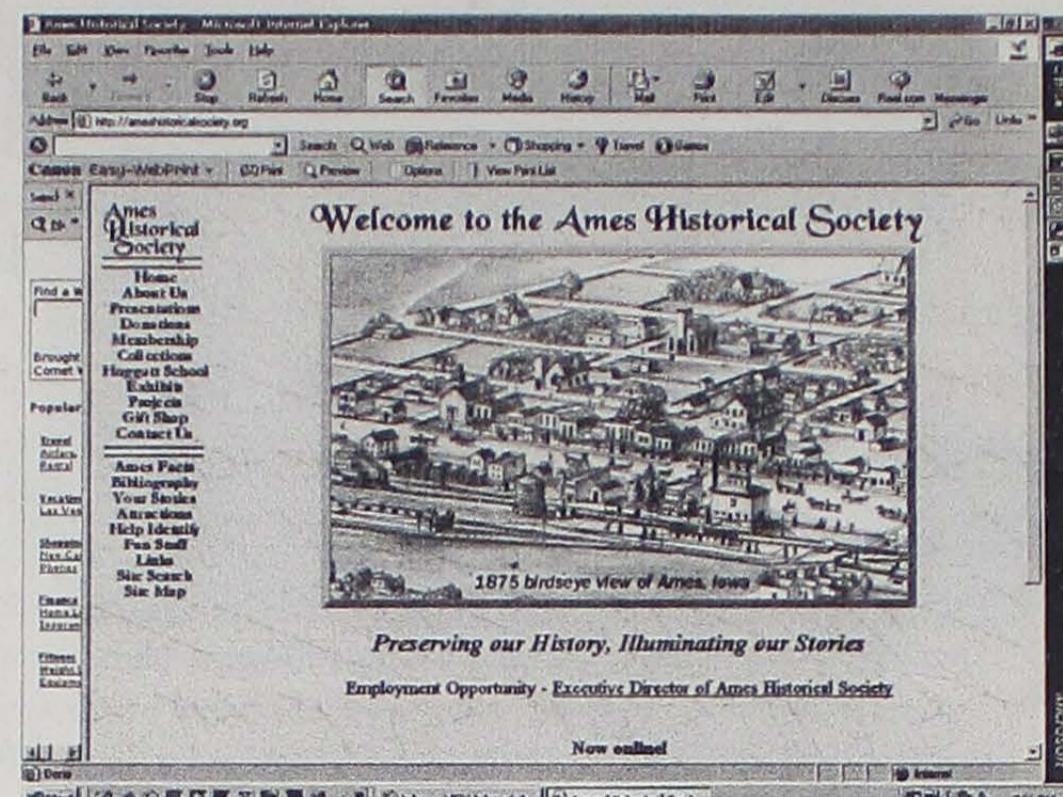
Kooser has published many volumes of poetry, and more recently, *Local Wonders*, a book of reminiscences and observations about his life in Iowa and Nebraska.

Both his poetry and prose are interwoven with memories of his growing-up years in Ames. Local residents will enjoy references to familiar places, and occasionally, will find a familiar name.

His father, Ted Kooser, was manager of Tilden's Store on Main Street, and later Younkers that also operated on Main.

In an interview, Kooser mentioned that the first poem he memorized was the verse by Drinkwater engraved in Gold Star Hall in the Iowa State Memorial Union.

# Ames Historical Society News

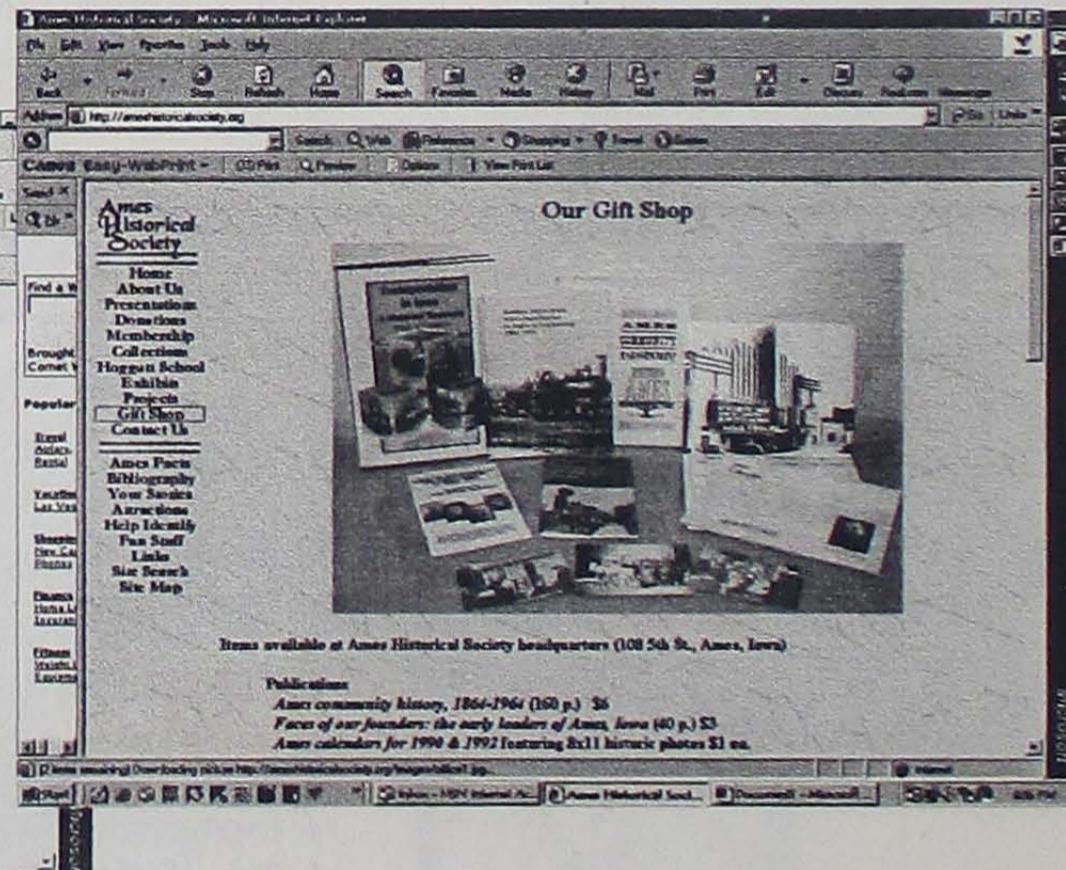


## Old Meets New - Society Launches a Website! Log on: [www.ameshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.ameshistoricalsociety.org)

An inspired team of volunteers helped the Society meet one of its top goals for 2004 in launching a substantive and informative website. A generous donation by Board member, Deb Vance and her husband, John Rose, will pay for one year's domain registration costs. John, an ISU systems analyst, is also providing an email forwarding service on the mail server in his home. John's colleague, Joe Anderson, also at ISU, is hosting the website on the web server he runs at his home.

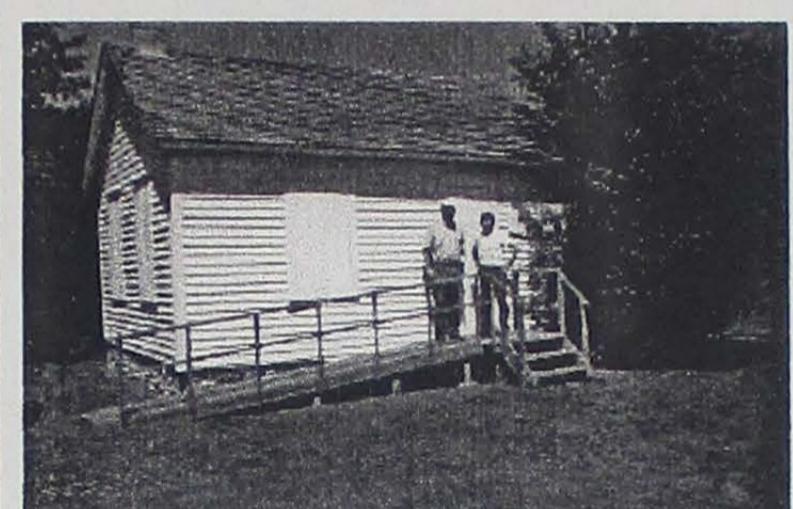
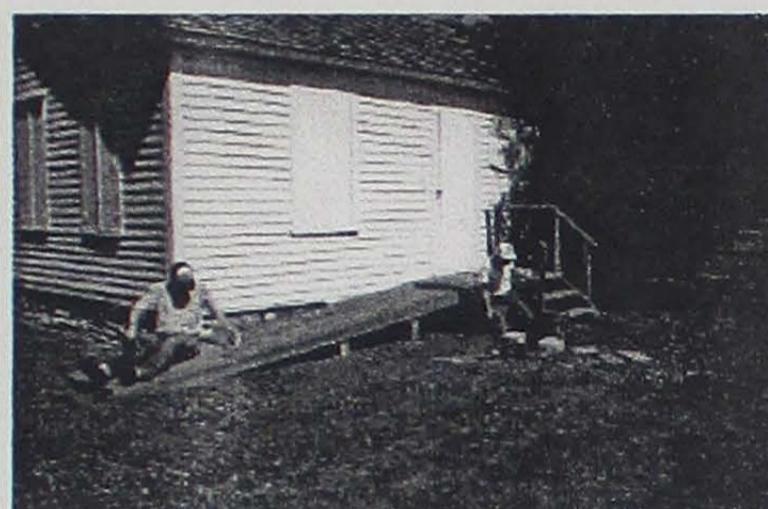
Several hundred hours were spent by collections curator, Dennis Wendell, preparing and editing 70+ pages of text on an array of subjects, creating a preliminary site map, and selecting visual materials. Experienced webmaster, Alan Spohnheimer, donated design and technical expertise in readying, mounting and maintaining the site. Collections Assistant, Sara Vouthilak, uses her skills in digital photography, scanning text and images, and computer manipulation to enhance the website.

Initial comments have been highly complimentary on the site's look, functionality and content. Several search engines have indexed the site since its launch on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to log on frequently as changes and additions are made almost weekly.



# Ames Historical Society News

## Hoggatt School Improvements Provide Access, Restore Interior



Hoggatt School has withstood the test of time. The one-room structure that was Ames' first school was built in 1861-2 and used for six years until outgrown.

The building was moved twice and incorporated into a private dwelling, where it remained hidden for over 100 years. Upon rediscovery in 1980, it was moved to the Meeker School grounds. In 1981-2, it was restored, retaining the ceiling and floor and adding new windows and siding over the original logs. Over the years, with no heating or cooling, the ceiling shed flaking paint "dandruff" on the school's contents and developed alarming cracks and bulges.

In early August, a restoration crew under Rollie Struss arrived at Hoggatt to renovate the interior. The ceiling was removed with hammer and chisel. Despite its fragile appearance, the ceiling was tenacious and removal was a filthy task. The area above the ceiling was filled with oily soot, residue from the school's wood burning stove and its later role as a kitchen.



## Hats Off to Volunteer Crew!

Despite swelling and contracting over the years, the rafters and the lath proved to be sound. Sheet rock was attached and the walls were sanded to remove the dirt stirred up by the work. The ceiling was painted a bright white to lighten the interior and the walls were painted their previous color. In addition to ceiling work, steps (recycled from the Baugé home) were added with an attached ramp to assist visitor accessibility.

Now the renovated Hoggatt is ready for its September 12<sup>th</sup> Festival celebrating of the release of the Iowa quarter with its image of a one-room school house.

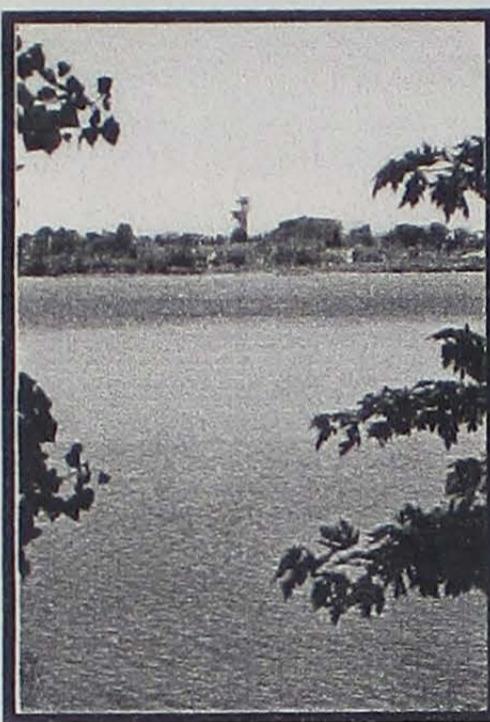
Many thanks to the outstanding crew members: Frank Ahrens, Mac Crump, Dave Edwards, Don Faas, Gene Freeman, Carole, Chris, Dean, Diane, Harold, Julie and Kathleen Jensen, Greg, Alec and Scott Bennet, Martha and Jorgen Rasmussen, John Richard, Rollie and Willie Struss, with helpful assistance from Dr. Susan Risius, Meeker Elementary Principal.

## Museum Building Fund Grows!

In our January newsletter, we featured a story about the anonymous donor of modest means who stimulated establishment of a Museum Building Procurement Fund. The fund continues to grow!

February 2004	\$1275	June 2004	\$3455
April 2004	\$2950	August 2004	\$3465

## Hayden Park Image Presented to City At Dedication



The Society has partnered with Ames Resident, Janet Jepeway, who has photographically documented the historic transition of the former Hallett's Quarry to Ada Hayden Heritage Park. Ames citizens overwhelmingly approved a bond issue to purchase and redevelop of the land as a park, nature preserve and back-up water supply. During dedication activities on August 28, a

large framed color photograph (image shown above) was presented to the City to mark the occasion.

Please renew today  
(if you have not)!

Membership renewals for 2004 are due on the one-year anniversary date of last year's payment.

See the label on this newsletter for your anniversary date and the level at which you renewed or joined.

Introductory	\$10	Sustaining	\$100
Individual	\$25	Benefactor	\$500
Family	\$40	Patron	\$1,000
Friend	\$50		

**Additional amount for Building Fund \$** \_\_\_\_\_  
(separate check please..)

Send to:  
**Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010**  
Soon!

Support Level: SUSTAINING, 2003  
Renewal Due Date: 4/2/04  
Janet Klaaas  
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Ames, IA 50010

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